

Message Text

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SUBJECT: TRINIDAD DELEGATION TO WORLD CONFERENCE OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

REF: STATE 119806

1. DR. CUTHBERT JOSEPH, MINISTER IN MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, HAS INFORMED ME THAT GOT CABINET ON MAY 28 SELECTED FOLLOWING THREE-WOMAN OFFICIAL TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO DELEGATION TO WORLD CONFERENCE OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR:

LADY JUSTICE ELIZABETH BOURNE--CHAIRPERSON OF T&T COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR

SENATOR RUBY FELIX--CHAIRPERSON OF GOT COMMISSION ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN;

MISS CORINNE BAPTISTE--COUNSELOR OF GOT EMBASSY WASHINGTON

2. LADY JUSTICE BOURNE AND SENATOR FELIX BOTH VERY WELL AND FAVORABLY KNOWN TO AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN. BIOGRAPHIC INFO FOLLOWS IN PARAGRAPHS BELOW. AS A MEMBER OF THE HIGH COURT,
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LADY JUSTICE BOURNE IS INDEPENDENT OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT, WHEREAS SENATOR FELIX (WHO ALSO HOLDS POSITION IN MINISTRY

OF LABOR) TENDS TO REPRESENT RULING PEOPLES NATIONAL MOVEMENT (PNM) ON WOMEN'S ISSUES. BOTH RELATIVELY CONSERVATIVE, HIGHLY COMPETENT WOMEN WHO ARE DEEPLY INVOLVED IN BASIC ISSUES WHICH WILL COME BEFORE WCIWY. EMBASSY FEELS THEIR INFLUENCE AT CONFERENCE WILL BE DIRECTLY DEVOTED TO SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES OF BASIC CONCERN AND THAT THEY WILL BE LITTLE INTERESTED IN CONTENTIOUS EXTRANEOUS ISSUES. IF SUCH MATTERS AS CERDS OR NIEO ARE RAISED, HOWEVER, GOTT DELEGATION COULD BE EXPECTED TO VOTE WITH THIRD WORLD MAJORITY AS AT OTHER CONFERENCES. NEVERTHELESS, BOURNE AND FELIX COULD BE HELPFUL TO USDEL IN TRYING TO KEEP CONFERENCE DIRECTED TO PRIMARY BUSINESS.

3. CORINNE BAPTISTE IS CAREER MEMBER GOTT FOREIGN SERVICE AND HAS NOT BEEN PRESENT IN TRINIDAD TO BE ACTIVE IN WOMEN'S AFFAIRS HERE IN RECENT YEARS. WE UNDERSTAND SHE IS COMPETENT AND WELL-REGARDED OFFICIAL, BUT DEFER TO DEPARTMENT'S (ARA/CAR) MORE RECENT ACQUAINTANCE WITH HER IN WASHINGTON EMBASSY.

4. BIOGRAPHIC DETAILS FOLLOW:

A) LADY JUSTICE BOURNE-LADY JUSTICE ELIZABETH BOURNE BECAME THE FIRST WOMAN TO SERVE AS A JUDGE ON THE HIGH COURT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO WHEN SHE WAS APPOINTED IN 1972. A ST. LUCIA-BORN BARRISTER WHO STUDIED AT MIDDLE TEMPLE IN LONDON, JUSTICE BOURNE HAS HELD A VARIETY OF LEGAL AND JUDICIAL POSITIONS IN TRINIDAD. SHE HAS SERVED AS CROWN COUNSEL, CHIEF PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL, AND LEGAL SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS AND, PRIOR TO HER APPOINTMENT TO THE BENCH, HAD BEEN CHIEFLY INVOLVED WITH DRAFTING LAWS RATHER THAN INTERPRETING THEM. IN 1969 SHE ATTENDED A SEMINAR FOR GOVERNMENT LAW OFFICERS AT HARVARD. SHE IS 55 YEARS OLD AND SINGLE.

B) SENATOR RUBY FELIX IS A PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOR, SOCIAL SECURITY AND COOPERATIVES WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE STATUS AND PROBLEMS OF WOMEN. PRIOR TO HER APPOINTMENT TO THE SENATE AND A PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARSHIP IN 1970, SHE WAS A TEACHER IN A PORT OF SPAIN GIRLS SCHOOL. REARED IN THE POOR EAST DRY RIVER SECTION OF PORT OF SPAIN, MISS FELIX HAS ARRIVED AT HER PRESENT POSITION THROUGH HER OWN DETERMINED EFFORTS. SHE HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS A CIVIC-MINDED ACTIVIST WHO HAS SHOWN AN UNITRING DEVOTION TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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THE PEOPLES NATIONAL MOVEMENT. SHE IS FIFTY YEARS OLD AND SINGLE.

C) MISS CORINNE BAPTISTE IS A CAREER DIPLOMAT IN THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FOREIGN SERVICE. A NATIVE OF TRINIDAD'S SECOND CITY, SAN FERNANDO, SHE WAS EDUCATED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES AND AT THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS. WHEN SHE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE T&T HIGH COMMISSION IN LONDON IN 1964, SHE WAS THE FIRST WOMAN IN HER SERVICE TO BE POSTED ABROAD. SHE IS 35 YEARS OLD AND SINGLE.

5. WE UNDERSTAND SEVERAL OTHER TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

MAY ATTEND IWY TRIBUNE BEING HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH WCIWY. SO FAR,
WE ARE CERTAIN ONLY OF MRS. GEMA RAMKISSOON, SOCIAL WORKER, CHAIRMAN
OF PORT OF SPAIN YWCA, AND VICE PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
VOLUNATRY ASSOCIATIONS FOR CHILD CARE; AND MRS. NESTA PATRICK, SOCIAL
WORKER, SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, PRESIDENT OF LEAGUE OF WOMEN
VOTERS, AND CHAIRMAN, CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE. EMBASSY WILL PROVIDE
ADDITIONAL NAMES OF TRIBUNE PARTICIPANTS WHEN KNOWN IF DEPT DESIRES.

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